



The Garrison Safety Office

MAY 2007

SAFETY ALERT

for the

Darmstadt, Heidelberg, Kaiserslautern and Mannheim

Communities

AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS*

On 11 Apr 2007 at 0800 the operators of two vehicles, a late model pickup truck and a Chrysler Sebring convertible were engaged in a series of hand gestures at each other while traveling along Interstate 270 near Maryland Highway 85. Other drivers noted their actions and called the Maryland State Police for assistance. Before the State Police arrived on scene, the driver of the pickup truck cut in front of the Sebring forcing it off the road. The Sebring overturned and came to a stop on the highway blocking all three lanes of traffic, where it remained for more than three hours while police investigated the accident. The two occupants of the Sebring died in the crash, and the driver of the pickup is being sought after fleeing the scene. The two fatalities were not wearing their safety belts.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration defines aggressive driving as "the operation of a motor vehicle in a manner which endangers or is likely to endanger persons or property." Aggressive driving, or road rage, is a growing problem in the United States and abroad. According to the American Automobile Association, these incidents have been increasing by 7% each year since 1990. Roadway congestion is considered a major contributing factor in these aggressive driving behaviors.

The following guidance on aggressive drivers is extracted from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/enforce/aggdrv.html>
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AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS, WHO ARE THEY? Are you one??

Here's what we know of them, so far:

* These high risk drivers climb into the anonymity of an automobile and take out their frustrations on anybody at any time. For them, frustration levels are high, and level of concern for fellow motorists is low.

* They run stop signs and red lights, speed, tailgate, weave in and out of traffic, pass on the right, make improper and unsafe lane changes, make hand and facial gestures, scream, honk, and flash their lights.

* They drive at speeds far in excess of the norm which causes them to: follow too closely, change lanes frequently and abruptly without notice (signals), pass on the shoulder or unpaved portions of the roadway, and leer at and/or threaten - verbally or through gestures - motorists who are thoughtless enough to be in front of them.

WHEN CONFRONTED BY AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS:

- * First and foremost make every attempt to get out of their way.
- * Put your pride in the back seat. Do not challenge them by speeding up or attempting to hold-your-own in your travel lane.
- * Wear your seat belt. It will hold you in your seat and behind the wheel in case you need to make an abrupt driving maneuver and it will protect you in a crash.
- * Avoid eye contact.
- * Ignore gestures and refuse to return them.
- * Report aggressive drivers to the appropriate authorities by providing a vehicle description, license number, location, and if possible, direction of travel.
- * If you have a cellular phone, and can do it safely, call the police -- many have special numbers (e.g. 9-1-1 or #77).
- * If an aggressive driver is involved in a crash farther down the road, stop a safe distance from the crash scene, wait for the police to arrive and report the driving behavior that you witnessed.

Remember how to deal with aggressive drivers.

Avoid the challenges or confrontations of an aggressive driver and support law enforcement's efforts to rid the streets and highways of this menace.

My POC for driver safety is Ms. Tina Hill who may be reached at (703) 602-2605, tina.hill@hqda.army.mil.

Thanks for what you do for Soldiers and Families every day.

SUPPORT AND DEFEND

BG John A. Macdonald
Deputy Commanding General
Installation Management Command

***extracted from BG Macdonalds April 24th 2007 e-mail to Region Directors and Garrison Commanders, Combating Aggressive Driving**